

Theodore Irwin House
240 N. Grand Avenue
Pasadena
Los Angeles County
California

HABS No. CA-1985

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REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

THEODORE IRWIN HOUSE

HABS No. CA-1985

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Location: 240 N. Grand Avenue
Pasadena, Los Angeles County, California

Present Owner
and Occupant: Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Wormhoudt

Present Use: Residence

Significance: Built in 1906, the Irwin House reveals many of the design elements which would later be refined by the talented team of Charles and Henry Greene. With the two-story court in the center, and the rooms grouped around it, the house has one of the most unusual plans of any that the Greene brothers designed. In addition, the house represents an experimental period in their detailing, and displays their ingenuity in transforming what was originally a single-story structure for a former client into a much larger two-story house.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1906
2. Architect: Greene and Greene (Charles Sumner Green, Henry Mather Greene)
3. Original and Subsequent Owners:

1903	Katherine M. Duncan (for whom the original one-story house was built)
1905	Theodore Irwin (who had the house enlarged to its present form)
1925	Thomas P. Smith, Jr.
1941	Peter A. Horn
1963	Allen O. Smith
1969	Kenneth Wormhoudt

4. Builder: Not known
5. Original plans and construction: Original drawings for the house are at the Avery Library, Columbia University, New York, New York. A redrawn plan by Peter A. Horn (who purchased the house in 1941) is in the Greene and Greene Library, Gamble House, Pasadena, California (HABS No. CA-1981).
6. Alterations and additions:
 - 1905 major remodelling for Theodore Irwin, bringing the house to its present size and shape.
Architects: Greene and Greene
 - n.d. addition to garage.
Architects: Greene and Greene
 - 1927 addition to garage for Thomas P. Smith, Jr.
Architect: Henry M. Greene
 - n.d. addition to garage apartment.
Architect: unknown
 - 1964 complete remodelling of kitchen and pantry.
Architect: Randell L. Makinson

Prepared by: Randell L. Makinson
April 22, 1971

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: A major monument in the work of architects, Greene and Greene, the Irwin House displays many details that would later become more refined in their work. Architecturally, the house combines elements of the bungalow style, but enlarges and redefines them to emerge as a singular composition. With its carefully designed and crafted interior (as well as exterior) details, it is also an important chapter in the Craftsmen story of early 20th century American architecture. Splayed eaves and definite horizontal lines also give the house a decided Japanese flavor.
2. Condition of fabric: Structurally sound, though in need of repair from roof leaks and deterioration of some timbers.

B. Description of exterior:

1. Overall description: The house is a two story building of irregular configuration, arranged around a small central court.
2. Foundations: Stone and concrete. Although the house is basically a frame structure, porch supports, terrace walls, and the exposed foundations are of rock and clinker brick construction. Cobblestones were used as decorative accents in this construction.
3. Walls: Frame walls, with wooden shingles (6" wide and 14" exposed length), tinted green.
4. Structural system: Western frame, post and beam.
5. Porches: A porch to the southwest and a large terrace wrapping from the west to the north side of the house are major elements. A small entry porch is at the northeast corner. There is a second-story balcony on the west and north sides.
6. Chimneys: There are four chimneys, all of clinker brick with cobblestone inserts. All are capped with hipped roofs of concrete, and are major design elements.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doors: Doors are individually designed, and are also an important component of the character of the house. Sheet 13 of 14 of the accompanying HABS drawings details the major doors as well as the minor ones.
 - b. Windows: Most of the windows are casement with matching casement screens. First floor windows are the most complex, with two horizontal lights over two vertical lights. Second floor windows have one small light over one large light. There are large fixed plate-glass windows in the dining room, reception room, living room, and entry.
8. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: There is a separate gable roof for each of the various portions of the house. Tar and gravel malthoid roofing has replaced the original shingles.

- b. Cornice, eaves: Exposed rafters extend beyond the edge of roof. Eaves are splayed at the gable ends.

C. Description of interior

1. Floor plans: See sheets 3, 4, and 5 of the accompanying HABS drawings for floor plans and room designations.
2. Stairways: The stairway to the second floor is located in the southwest corner of the house. There are 19 risers, 6" high, and the treads are 11-1/2" deep. The stair rises three steps in a westernly direction, then there is a landing, and the remaining flight is at a 90-degree angle to the north.
3. Flooring: There is 1" and 2" tongue and groove oak flooring in the house. The basement floor is the exposed concrete slab. Quarry tile and brick are used as porch and terrace floors.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster in most areas; wooden wainscot in stairhall and major reception rooms. Tile in baths.
5. Openings:
 - a. Doorways: See sheet 13 of the accompanying HABS drawings for door details.
 - b. Windows: See item 7 in exterior description, supra.
6. Decorative features: Generally, there is flat wooden trim around openings. See sheets 9, 10, 11, and 12 of the accompanying HABS drawings for details of interior decorative features. These were designed by the architects and are integral to the overall decorative scheme.
7. Hardware: Brass plate and knobs for doorways, butt hinges.
8. Mechanical equipment:
 - a. Heating: There are five fireplaces. There is also a central, forced air heating system.
 - b. Lighting: Electric lamp fixtures designed by the architects.

D. Site:

1. General setting: The house occupies a raised site, and has a lawn with retaining walls. The general location is a residential area with several other houses of Greene and Greene nearby (See site plan for sheet I of the accompanying HABS drawings).
2. Outbuildings: There is an adjacent garage which has a (later) apartment above it. (See sheet 14 of accompanying HABS drawings).

Prepared by: Robert C. Geibner
Project Supervisor
HABS Los Angeles Team
Summer 1968

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

The Western Architect, July 1908

The Craftsman Magazine, August 1912, pp. 532-47

The Craftsman Magazine, July 1907, pp. 446-451

AIA Journal, Clay Lancaster, August 1960, 34: 39-46

The Japanese Influence in America, Clay Lancaster, published by Rawls, New York City

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This documentation was produced as part of the HABS Los Angeles team in the summer of 1968. Full project information is given on sheet 1 of the accompanying HABS drawings.